

Message Text

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43

ACTION EUR-25

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO AMEMBASSY LISBON

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PO, UK, ICFTU, ELAB

SUBJECT: THE TUC VIEW ON PORTUGAL

1. ALAN HARGREAVES, HEAD OF THE TUC INTERNATIONAL DEPARTMENT, TOLD US THAT THE TUC IS WAITING FOR THE DUST TO SETTLE WITHIN THE NASCENT PORTUGUESE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT BEFORE IT DECIDES ON ITS SUPPORT AND COURSE OF ACTION IN THAT COUNTRY.

2. HARGREAVES SAID THAT THERE ARE NOW FIVE CENTRAL TRADE UNION ORGANIZATIONS IN PORTUGAL. THE TUC INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE, WHICH MET EARLIER THIS MONTH (MAY 6), THUS DECIDED TO WAIT UNTIL A SINGLE UNIFIED ORGANIZATION DEVELOPS BEFORE IT CONSIDERS CONCRETE AID PROGRAMS. HE EMPHASIZED, HOWEVER, THAT ON THE POLITICAL SIDE, THE TUC BELIEVES 'EVERY SUPPORT SHOULD BE GIVEN THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS.'

3. IN KEEPING WITH THIS POSITION THE TUC HAS NOT RESPONDED POSITIVELY TO THE ICFTU'S REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE TO

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PORTUGUESE UNIONS AND WILL DISCUSS THIS QUESTION FURTHER

AT THE ICFTU EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING MAY 29-31 IN BRUSSELS. AS ANOTHER TUC OFFICIAL PUT IT, 'W E DON'T WANT TO SUPPORT ANYTHING WHICH MEANS SPLITTING THE PORTUGUESE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT.'

4. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH THERE IS CERTAINLY SOME LOGIC TO THE TUC'S POSITION, IT WOULD APPEAR TO US THAT THERE IS ALSO DANGER - GIVEN THE RUDIMENTARY CHARACTER OF THE PORTUGUESE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT - THAT THE COMMUNIST MIGHT HAVE GREATER OPPORTUNITY TO ASSUME CONTROL OF A UNIFIED ORGANIZATION, OR AT LEAST TO HAVE MAJOR INFLUENCE IN ONE. WE WOULD APPRECIATE EMBASSY LISBON'S ASSESSMENT OF THIS ISSUE. SOHM

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